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the Old Testament proofs of man's need of Christ as an atoning Savior, and of the need of all his great work of redemption, which is, when rightly understood, a redemption from sins, no less than a redemption from sin.

GENESIS XVII., 6-8 AND GALATIANS III., 16.

BY REV. JAMES SCOTT,

Aberlour, Craigellachie, N. B., Scotland.

And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*

New Testament quotation is a subject at once of much difficulty and of much critical importance. This citation may be regarded as a crucial instance well worthy of analysis. Not only have unbelievers founded an argument against the truth and authority of Scripture on the alleged inaccuracy both in form and sense of the quotations in the New Testament from the Old, but rationalistic believers in revelation and inspiration, such as Wetstein, Semler, and Seiler, and more recently Rosenmueller, Adam Clarke, Moses Stuart and Rhiem, have regarded some of them as mere rhetorical displays and rabbinical accommodations to current popular beliefs and prejudices. Notwithstanding, they are all capable of complete vindication both in their form and principle. These quotations are made on several principles, such as the psychological, the grammatical, the synthetic, the analogical, and the prophetic or prospective.†

We believe that the principle of this citation or application of an Old Testament text is the grammatical or philological, which embraces and covers both the literal and the tropical text of Scripture. Both classes of passages are alike grammatically interpreted. The difference between them lies in themselves, and not in the principle of their interpretation. This is evident from the definition of the terms themselves. Language is literal when the same words uniformly represent the same things or thoughts, which are thereby spontaneously presented to the mind as soon as the word or sign is seen or heard. It is figurative when words become conventionally the signs of other

* Οὐ λέγει· καὶ τοῖς σπέρμασιν, ὡς ἐπὶ πολλῶν, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐφ' ἐνός, καὶ τῷ σπέρματι σον, δις ἐστι Χριστός.

† See the writer's "Principles of New Testament Quotation." New York: Scribner, Welford & Armstrong.

things or thoughts than those of which they are the natural or ordinary symbols. This implies that natural things themselves, of which words are the signs, are made the symbols of spiritual thoughts or things, so that the theory or rationale of all forms of language may be summed up in a single syllogistic formula:—Words are the signs of things; things are made the signs of thoughts; therefore words are the signs of thoughts. Accordingly, the text of the ancient Scripture, whether literal or figurative, was grammatically interpreted or applied by our Lord and his apostles, as is done now by all true critics. The authors of the New Testament acknowledged a double reference, based on the relation between natural and spiritual things, but not a double or divided sense, which did not lie in the language. They regarded the sense of Scripture as one, and, therefore, to be interpreted philologically, whether the words were literal or tropical. They carefully shunned the rock of uniform literalism on the one hand, and the whirlpool of mysticism on the other. They neither found Christ, like Cocceius, everywhere, nor, like Grotius, nowhere. They read the language of Scripture in the light of usage, as well as in the light of inspiration, and not in the light of popular prejudice, preconceived opinions, or the principles of the pagan or rabbinical schools. They understood the use and abuse of reason in the interpretation of the divine word, of which some of the early Fathers, their successors, were profoundly ignorant. We find in their exegesis nothing akin to the fanciful allegories of Barnabas, or the manifold uses of Origen, or the plastic symbolism of Ammonius Saccas, who labored to harmonize all the systems both of philosophy and religion not only with themselves but with each other. There is no trace of the Platonism of Philo and Josephus and of the rabbinical literature after the close of the Canon and during the prevalence of the Oriental and Alexandrian philosophies.

Paul here interprets the Abrahamic promise grammatically, and applies it to Christ personally. And to make his meaning all the clearer he renders it both negatively and positively, and uses the masculine relative pronoun *ιος* after the neuter noun *σπέρμα*, “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which (who) is Christ.” The word *zě-ră'*, the Hebrew equivalent of *σπέρμα*, like the English word *sheep*, is in several instances in the Old Testament, as Seth,¹ Samuel² and Solomon,³ individual or personal, though generally collective. And though it did not directly denote individuality, in the context of the promise, it might yet connote or involve it in all the circumstances of the case, which embraced the whole chosen seed

¹ Gen. iv., 25; Gen. xxi., 13. ² 1 Sam. i., 11. ³ 1 Chron. xxii., 10; Ps. ix., 26; 2 Sam. vii., 12, 14.

and Christ, the special seed of promise. The Abrahamic covenant was essentially a revelation of the covenant of grace, "Confirmed of God in Christ," with whom it was primarily made, as the second contracting party and prospective fulfiller, and merely secondarily made with Abraham. Consequently the chosen seed, from the beginning, derived their whole federal standing, character and destiny from Christ as their Surety and Head. The words of promise by themselves might be understood as expressing plurality rather than individuality, yet they connoted unity, or many in one, the members in the Head. And still more specifically, the context also in which the promise sits and in the light of which it must be read, expressly singles out and signalizes one individual, one family, and one class of character, as destined to culminate in one person, whom both Abraham and Moses knew to be the *seed* of promise, the grand personage by whom the elect seed would realize their destiny. And hence both kinds of unity, which involve one another, are thus grammatically interpreted and summed up in the aptest terms,—"He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."*

The meaning may be thus paraphrased and the application of the text to Christ personally is just—He speaks not of seeds as of several individuals, or of several sorts of seed, which he would have done had he meant both Isaac and Ishmael and their families, but he speaks as of one, Isaac personally, and his posterity, both genealogically and spiritually, which is Christ and the Church.

STUDIES IN ARCHÆOLOGY AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

BY JUSTIN A. SMITH, D. D.,

Editor of *The Standard*, Chicago.

VI.

Nationality and Empire.

In Volume Seven of "Records of the Past"—a series of books containing translations in English of the Chaldaean, Assyrian and Egyptian Monuments—is such a translation of one of the Chaldaic tablets to which the discoverer, Mr. George Smith, has given the name of the

LEGEND OF THE TOWN OF BABEL.

"The story which the tablet contains," says another English scholar, Mr. Boscawen, who is the translator of it as it stands in the book just named, "appears to be the building of some great temple tower, apparently by command of the king. The gods are angry at the work, and so to put an end to it they con-

* 1 Sam. viii., 15 בָּבֶל.—Mark iv., 31 σπέρματα. Matt. xiii., 31, 32.